

Withers

Chronicles of Border Warfare

OR, A

History of the Settlement by the Whites, of North-
Western Virginia, and of the Indian Wars and Massacres
in that section of the State

WITH

REFLECTIONS, ANECDOTES, &c.

BY

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A New Edition

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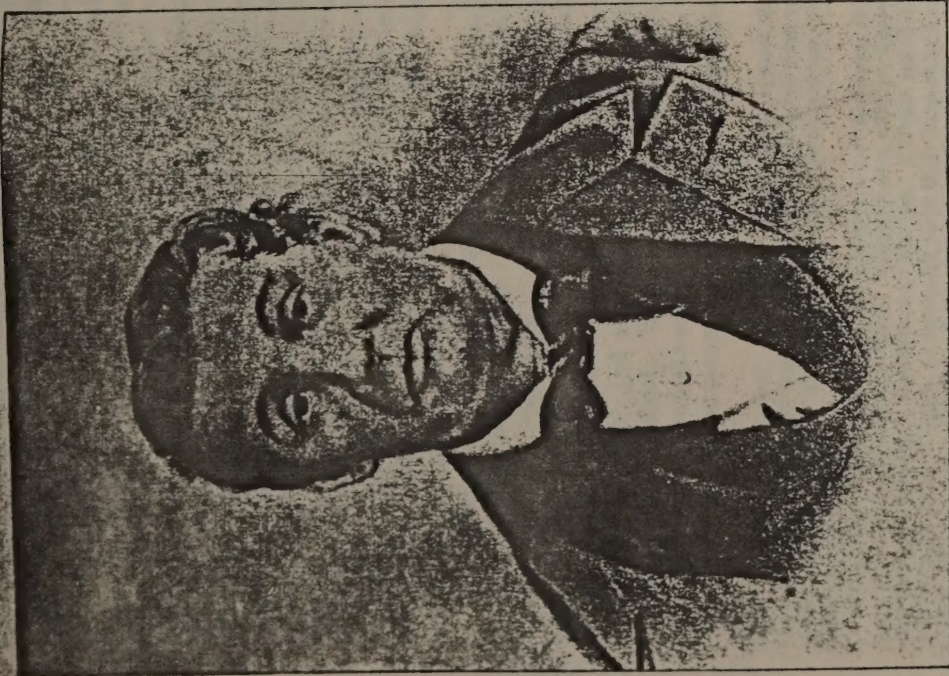
R 975.4
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With the addition of a *Memoir of the Author, and several Illustrative Notes*

BY THE LATE

LYMAN COPELAND DRAPER

Author of "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," "Autograph Collections
of the Signers," etc.



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1895

then called the "Upper Tract," all sought shelter from the tempest of savage ferocity; and at the time the Indians appeared before [66] it, there were contained within its walls between thirty and forty persons of both sexes and of different ages. Among them was Mr. Dyer, (the father of Col. Dyer now of Pendleton) and his family. On the morning of the fatal day, Col. Dyer and his sister left the fort for the accomplishment of some object, and although no Indians had been seen there for some time, yet did they not proceed far, before they came in view of a party of forty or fifty Shawanees, going directly towards the fort. Alarmed for their own safety, as well as for the safety of their friends, the brother and sister endeavored by a hasty flight to reach the gate and gain admittance into the garrison; but before they could effect this, they were overtaken and made captives.

The Indians rushed immediately to the fort and commenced a furious assault on it. Capt. Sivert prevailed, (not without much opposition,) on the besieged, to forbear firing 'till he should endeavor to negotiate with, and buy off the enemy. With this view, and under the protection of a flag he went out, and soon succeeded in making the wished for arrangement. When he returned, the gates were thrown open, and the enemy admitted.

No sooner had the money and other articles, stipulated

which was solemnly promised. That when the gate was opened, the Indians rushed in with demoniac yells, the whites fled, but were retaken, except one person; the massacre then took place, and ten were carried off into captivity.

Still another tradition preserved by Kercheval, says the noted Delaware chief, Killbuck, led the Indians. Seybert's son, a lad of fifteen, exhibited great bravery in the defense of the fort. Killbuck called out to Capt. Seybert, in English, to surrender, and their lives should be spared; when young Seybert at this instant, aimed his loaded gun at the chief, and the father seized it, and took it from him, saying they could not successfully defend the place, and to save their lives should surrender, confiding in Killbuck's assurances. Capt. Seybert was among the first of those sacrificed. Young Seybert was among the prisoners, and told the chief how near he came to killing him. "You young rascal," laughingly replied Killbuck, "if you had killed me, you would have saved the fort, for had I fallen, my warriors would have immediately fled, and given up the siege in despair."—L. C. D.

to be given, been handed over to the Indians, than a most bloody tragedy was begun to be acted. Arranging the inmates of the fort, in two rows, with a space of about ten feet between them, two Indians were selected; who taking each his station at the head of a row, with their tomahawks most cruelly murdered almost every white person in the fort; some few, whom caprice or some other cause, induced them to spare, were carried into captivity, —such articles as could be well carried away were taken off by the Indians; the remainder was consumed, with the fort, by fire.

The course pursued by Capt. Sivert, has been supposed to have been dictated by timidity and an ill founded apprehension of danger from the attack. It is certain that strong opposition was made to it by many; and it has been said that his own son raised his rifle to shoot him, when he ordered the gates to be thrown open; and was only prevented from executing his purpose, by the interference of some near to him. Capt. Sivert was also supported by many, in the plan which he proposed to rid the fort of its assailants: it was known to be weak, and incapable of withstanding a vigorous onset; and [67] its garrison was illy supplied with the munitions of war. Experience might have taught them, however, the futility of any measure of security, founded in a reliance on Indian faith, in time of hostility; and in deep and bitter anguish, they were made to feel its realization in the present instance.

In the summer of 1761, about sixty Shawanee warriors penetrated the settlements on James river. To avoid the fort at the mouth of Looney's creek, on this river, they passed through Bowen's gap in Purgatory mountain, in the night; and ascending Purgatory creek, killed Thomas Perry, Joseph Dennis and his child and made prisoner his wife, Hannah Dennis. They then proceeded to the house of Robert Renix, where they captured Mrs. Renix, (a daughter of Sampson Archer) and her five children, William, Robert, Thomas, Joshua and Betsy—Mr. Renix not being at home. They then went to the house of Thomas Smith, where Renix was; and shot and scalped

him and Smith; and took with them, Mrs. Smith and Sally Jew, a white servant girl.¹

William and Audley Maxwell, and George Matthews, (afterwards governor of Georgia,) were then going to Smith's house; and hearing the report of the guns, supposed that there was a shooting match. But when they rode to the front of the house and saw the dead bodies of Smith and Renix lying in the yard, they discovered their mistake; and contemplating for a moment the awful spectacle, wheeled to ride back. At this instant several guns were fired at them; fortunately without doing any execution, except the cutting off the club of Mr. Matthews' cue. The door of the house was then suddenly opened; the Indians rushed out and raising the war cry, several of them fired—Audley Maxwell was slightly wounded in the arm.

It appeared afterwards, that the Indians had seen Matthews and the Maxwells coming; and that some of them had crowded into the house, while the others with the prisoners went to the north side of it, and concealed themselves behind some fallen timber. Mrs. Renix, after she was restored to her friends in 1766, stated that she was sitting tied, in the midst of four Indians, who laying their guns on a log, took deliberate aim at Matthews; the others firing at the Maxwells—The sudden wheeling of their horses no doubt saved the lives of all three.

The Indians then divided, and twenty of them taking the [68] prisoners, the plunder and some horses which they had stolen, set off by the way of Jackson's river, for

¹The name is Renick. Robert Renick, who was killed on the occasion referred to, was a man of character and influence in his day. His name appears on Capt. John Smith's company roll of Augusta militia as early as 1742; and four years later, he was lieutenant of a mounted company of Augusta militia. Instead of 1761, the captivity of the Renick family occurred July 25, 1757, as shown by the Preston Register, which states that Renick and another were killed on that day—Mrs. Renick and seven children, and a Mrs. Dennis, captured; and the same day, at Craig's Creek, one man was killed and two wounded. The Renick traditions state that Mrs. Renick had only five children when taken; and one born after reaching the Indian towns; and corrects some other statements not properly related in Withers's narrative of the affair.—L. C. D.

Ohio; the remainder started towards Cedar creek, in the ostensible view of committing farther depredations. But Matthews and the Maxwells had sounded the alarm, and the whole settlement were soon collected at Smith's stockade fort, at the Big spring near to Springfield. Here the women and children were left to be defended by Audley Maxwell and five other men; while the others, forming a party of twenty-two, with George Matthews at their head, set out in quest of the enemy.

The Indians were soon overtaken, and after a severe engagement, were forced to give ground. Matthews and his party followed in pursuit, as far as Purgatory creek; but the night being very dark in consequence of a continued rain, the fugitives effected an escape; and overtaking their comrades with the prisoners and plunder, on the next evening, at the forks of the James and Cowpasture rivers, proceeded to Ohio without further molestation.

When Matthews and his men, on the morning succeeding the engagement, returned to the field of battle, they found nine Indians dead; whom they buried on the spot. Benjamin Smith, Thomas Maury and the father of Sally Jew, were the only persons of Matthews' party, who were killed—these, together with those who had been murdered on the preceding day, were buried near the fork of a branch, in (what is now) the meadow of Thomas Cross sr.

In Boquet's treaty with the Ohio Indians, it was stipulated that the whites detained by them in captivity were to be brought in and redeemed. In compliance with this stipulation, Mrs. Renix was brought to Staunton in 1767 and ransomed, together with two of her sons, William, the late Col. Renix of Greenbrier, and Robert, also of Greenbrier—Betsy, her daughter, had died on the Miami. Thomas returned in 1788, but soon after removed and settled, on the Scioto, near Chillicothe. Joshua never came back; he took an Indian wife and became a Chief among the Miamies—he amassed a considerable fortune and died near Detroit in 1810.

Hannah Dennis was separated from the other captives,

[75] CHAPTER IV.

During the continuance of the French war, and of that with the Indians which immediately succeeded it, the entire frontier from New York to Georgia was exposed to the merciless fury of the savages. In no instance were the measures of defence adopted by the different colonies, adequate to their object.—From some unaccountable fatuity in those who had the direction of this matter, a defensive war, which alone could have checked aggression and prevented the effusion of blood, was delayed 'till the whole population, of the country west of the Blue ridge, had retired east of those mountains; or were cooped up in forts.

The chief means of defence employed, were the militia of the adjoining counties, and the establishment of a line of forts and block-houses, dispersed along a considerable extent of country, and occupied by detachments of British colonial troops, or by militiamen. All these were utterly incompetent to effect security; partly from the circumstances of the case, and somewhat from the entire want of discipline, and the absence of that subordination which is absolutely necessary to render an army effective.

So great and apparent were the insubordination and remissness of duty, on the part of the various garrisons, that Gen. Washington, declared them "utterly inefficient and useless;" and the inhabitants themselves, could place no reliance whatever on them, for protection. In a particular instance, such were the inattention and carelessness of the garrison that several children playing under the walls of the fort, were run down and caught by the Indians, who were not discovered 'till they arrived at the very gate.¹

In Virginia the error of confiding on the militia, soon

¹ At Dickinson's fort in 1755.

became apparent.¹ Upon the earnest remonstrance and entreaty of General Washington, the colonial legislature substituted a force of regulars,² [76] which at once effected the partial security of her frontier, and gave confidence to the inhabitants.

In Pennsylvania, from the pacific disposition of her rulers and their abhorrence of war of any kind, her border settlements suffered most severely. The whole extent of her frontier was desolated by the Indians, and irruptions were frequently made by them into the interior. The establishments, which had been made in the Conococheague valley, were altogether broken up and scenes of the greatest barbarity, on one side, and of the utmost suffering on the other, were constantly exhibiting. A few instances of this suffering and of that barbarity, may not be improperly adduced here. They will serve to illustrate the condition of those who were within reach of the savage enemy; and perhaps, to palliate the enormities practiced on the christian Indians.

In the fall of 1754 about forty or fifty Indians entered that province, and dividing themselves into two parties, sought the unprotected settlements, for purposes of murder and devastation: the smaller party went about the forks of Delaware—the other directing their steps along the Susquehanna. On the 2nd of October, twelve of the former appeared before the house of Peter Williamson, (a Scotchman, with no family but his wife,) who had made considerable improvement near the Delaware river. Mrs. Williamson being from home, he sat up later than usual, and about 11 o'clock was astounded at the savage war whoop, resounding from various directions, near to the house. Going to the window, he perceived several Indians standing in the yard, one of whom, in broken English, promised that if he would come out and surrender he

¹ When the Indians were most troublesome, and threatening even the destruction of Winchester, Lord Fairfax who was commandant of the militia of Frederick and Hampshire, ordered them out. Three days active exertion on his part, brought only 20 in the field.

² Rather rangers, who seem to have been enlisted to serve a year, and were re-engaged when necessary.—L. C. D.

should not be killed; threatening at the same time that if he did not, they would burn him up in his house. Unable to offer an effectual resistance, and preferring the chance of safety by surrendering, to the certainty of a horrid death if he attempted an opposition, he yielded himself up a prisoner.

So soon as he was in their power they plundered the house of such articles as they could conveniently take with them, and set fire to it, and to the barn, in which was a quantity of wheat, some horses and other cattle. After inflicting some severe tortures on Williamson, and forcing him to carry a heavy weight of the plunder, which they had taken from him, they went to a neighboring house, occupied by Jacob Snyder, his wife, five children and a servant. The piercing cries, and [77] agonizing shrieks of these poor creatures, made no impression on the savages. The father, mother, and children were tomahawked and scalped, and their bodies consumed by fire together with the house. The servant was spared that he might aid in carrying their plunder; but manifesting deep distress at his situation as prisoner, he was tomahawked before they proceeded far.

Before they could accomplish farther mischief a fall of snow, making them apprehensive that they would be pursued by the united force of the settlement, induced them to return to Alamingo—taking Williamson with them.

On their way back, they met with the party of Indians, which had separated from them, as they approached the settlements. These had been lower down on the Susquehanna, and had succeeded in making greater havoc, and committing more depredations, than it had fallen to the lot of those who had taken Williamson, to commit. They had with them three prisoners and twenty scalps. According to the account of their transactions as detailed by the prisoners, they had on one day killed and scalped John Lewis, his wife and three children, and in a few days after had murdered, with almost every circumstance of cruelty, Jacob Miller, his wife and six children, and George Folke, his wife and nine children, cutting up

the bodies of the latter family and giving them piece-meal to the hogs in the pen. Wherever they had been, destruction marked their course. In every instance the houses, barns and grain stacks were consumed by fire; and the stock killed.

The three prisoners who had been brought in by the last party, endeavored soon after to effect an escape; but their ignorance of the country, and the persevering activity and vigilance of the Indians, prevented the accomplishment of their attempt. They were overtaken, and brought back; and then commenced a series of cruelties, tortures and death, sufficient to shock the sensibilities of the most obdurate heart, if unaccustomed to the perpetration of such enormities.

Two of them were tied to trees, around which large fires were kindled, and they suffered to remain for some time, in the gradual but horrible state of being scorched to death. After the Indians had enjoyed awhile the writhings of agony and the tears of anguish, which were drawn from these suffering victims, one, stepping within the circle, ripped open their bodies and threw their bowels into the flames. Others, to emulate [78] this most shocking deed, approached, and with knives, burning sticks, and heated irons, continued to lacerate, pierce and tear the flesh from their breasts, arms and legs, 'till death closed the scene of horrors and rendered its victims insensible to its pains.

The third was reserved a few hours, that he might be sacrificed under circumstances of peculiar enormity. A hole being dug in the ground of a depth sufficient to enable him to stand upright, with his head only exposed, his arms were pinioned to his body, he placed in it, and the loose earth thrown in and rammed closely around him. He was then scalped and permitted to remain in that situation for several hours. A fire was next kindled near his head. In vain did the poor suffering victim of hellish barbarity exclaim, that his brains were boiling in his head; and entreat the mercy of instant death. Deaf to his cries, and inexorable to his entreaties, they continued

the fire 'till his eye balls burst and gushed from their sockets, and death put a period to his sufferings.

Of all these horrid spectacles, Williamson was an unwilling spectator; and supposing that he was reserved for some still more cruel and barbarous fate, determined on escaping. This he was soon enabled to do; and returned to the settlements.¹

The frequent infliction of such enormities as these upon the helpless and unoffending women and children, as well as upon those who were more able to resist and better qualified to endure them; together with the desolation of herds, the devastation of crops, and the conflagration of houses which invariably characterized those incursions, engendered a general feeling of resentment, that sought in some instances, to wreak itself on those who were guiltless of any participation in those bloody deeds. That vindictive spirit led to the perpetration of offences against humanity, not less atrocious than those which they were intended to requite; and which obliterated every discriminative feature between the perpetrators of them, and their savage enemies.

The Canestoga Indians, to the number of forty, lived in a village, in the vicinity of Lancaster; they were in amity with the whites, and had been in peace and quiet for a considerable length of time. An association of men, denominated the "Paxton boys," broke into their little town and murdered all who were found at home—fourteen men, women and children fell a prey to the savage brutality of those sons of civilization [79]. The safety of the others was sought to be effected, by confining them in the jail at Lancaster. It was in vain. The walls of a prison could afford no protection, from the relentless fury of these exasperated men. The jail doors were broken

¹ Peter Williamson had singular adventures. When a boy he was kidnapped at Aberdeen, and sent to America, for which he afterwards recovered damages. It is said that he passed a considerable period among the Cherokees. He instituted the first penny post at Edinburgh, for which, when the government assumed it, he received a pension. His *Memoirs*, and *French and Indian Cruelty Exemplified*, were works of interest. He died in Edinburgh in 1799.—L. C. D.

open, and its wretched inmates cruelly murdered.—And, as if their deaths could not satiate their inordinate murderers, their bodies were brutally mangled, the hands and feet lopped off, and scalps torn from the bleeding heads of innocent infants.

A similar fate impended the christian Indians of Nequetank and Nain; and was only averted, by the timely interposition of the government of Pennsylvania. They were removed to Philadelphia, where they remained from November 1763 'till after the close of the war in December 1764; during which time the Paxton boys twice assembled in the neighborhood of the city, for the purpose of assaulting the barracks and murdering the Indians, but were deterred by the military preparations made to oppose them; and ultimately, but reluctantly, desisted.

Had the feelings excited in the minds of these misguided men, by the cruelties of the Indians, been properly directed, it would have produced a quite different result. If, instead of avenging the outrages of others, upon those who were no otherwise guilty than in the complexion of their skin, they had directed their exertions to the repressing of invasion, and the punishment of its authors, much good might have been achieved; and they, instead of being stigmatized as murderers of the innocent, would have been hailed as benefactors of the border settlements. Associations of this kind were formed in that province, and contributed no little to lessen the frequency of Indian massacres, and to prevent the effusion of blood, and the destruction of property. At the time the Paxton boys were meditating and endeavoring to effect the destruction of the peaceable christian Indians, another company, formed by voluntary league, was actively engaged in checking the intrusions, of those who were enemies, and in punishing their aggressions. A company of riflemen, called the Black boys (from the fact of their painting themselves red and black, after the Indian fashion,) under the command of Capt. James Smith, contributed to preserve the Conococheague valley, during the years 1763 and 1764, from the devastation [80] which had overspread it early after the commencement of Braddock's war.

Capt. Smith had been captured by the Indians in the spring of 1755, and remained with them until the spring of 1759, when he left them at Montreal, and after some time arrived at home in Pennsylvania. He was in Fort du Quesne, when the Indians and French went out to surprise Gen. Braddock; and witnessed the burnings and other dreadful tortures inflicted upon those who were so unfortunate as to have been made prisoners; and the orgies and demoniacal revels with which the victory was celebrated. He was subsequently adopted into a family, by which he was kindly treated; and became well acquainted with their manner of warfare, and the various arts practised by them, to ensure success in their predatory incursions, and afterwards to elude pursuit. He became satisfied from observation, that to combat Indians successfully, they must be encountered in their own way; and he accordingly instructed his men in the Indian mode of warfare, dressed them after the Indian fashion, and fought after the Indian manner.¹

An instance of the good effect resulting from practicing the arts and stratagems of the Indians, occurred during this war; and to its success the garrison of Fort Pitt were indebted for their preservation.

After the ratification of the treaty of peace which had been concluded between England and France, war con-

¹ Col. James Smith was born in Franklin county, Pa., in 1737; was captured by Indians in 1755, remaining in captivity until his escape in 1759. He served as ensign in 1763, and lieutenant under Bouquet in 1764; he was a leader, for several years, of the Black Boys—a sort of regulators of the traders who, the Black Boys thought, supplied the Indians with the munitions of war. As the troubles with the mother country began, Smith was selected for frontier service, and held civil and military positions—captain in the Pennsylvania line; then in 1777 as major under Washington; in 1778, he was promoted to the rank of colonel of militia, and led an expedition against the Indian town on French Creek. In 1788, he removed to Kentucky; served in the early Kentucky conventions, preparatory to State organization, and also in the legislature. He did missionary work in Kentucky and Tennessee, and preached among the Indians. He wrote a valuable account of his Indian captivity, republished a few years since by Robert Clarke & Co., Cincinnati, and a treatise on Indian warfare, besides two controversial pamphlets against the Shakers. He died in Washington county, Ky., in 1812, aged about seventy-five years.—L. C. D.

tinued to be waged by the Indians on the whole western frontier. A large body of them had collected and marched to Fort Pitt, with a view to its reduction by famine. It had been invested for some time and the garrison being too weak to sally out and give battle to the besiegers, Capt. Ecuyer dispatched messengers with the intelligence of his situation and a request for aid and provisions: these were either compelled to return or be killed, as the country for some distance east of Fort Pitt was in the possession of the savages.¹

At length a quantity of provisions were ordered by Gov. Amherst for the relief of the fort, and forwarded under a strong guard commanded by Colonel Boquet. The Indians were soon apprized of this and determined on intercepting the provisions, and if practicable, to prevent their reaching the place of their destination. With this object in view, a considerable force was detached, to watch the motions of Col. Boquet and [81] upon a favorable opportunity to give him battle. In a narrow defile on Turtle creek an attack was made by the Indians, and a severe engagement ensued. Both armies fought with the most obstinate bravery, from one o'clock 'till night, and in the morning it was resumed, and continued with unabated fury for several hours. At length Col. Boquet, having placed four companies of infantry and grenadiers in ambush, ordered a retreat. So soon as this was commenced, the Indians, confident of victory, pressed forward with considerable impetuosity, and fell into the ambuscade. This decided the contest—the Indians were repulsed with great slaughter and dispersed.

The loss of the British, in killed and wounded, exceeded one hundred. That they were not entirely cut off, was attributable to the stratagem of the retreat (a favorite one of the Indians;) the success of which not only saved

¹ Captain Simeon Ecuyer, like Bouquet, was a native of Switzerland; he did good service on the frontiers, especially in the gallant defense of Fort Pitt in 1763. He became disgusted with the bad conduct of his soldiers, especially the grenadiers, and begged leave to resign. "For God's sake," he implored Bouquet, "let me go, and raise cabbages."—L. C. D.

the detachment under Col. Boquet, but likewise preserved Fort Pitt, from falling into the hands of the savage foe.

The loss sustained by the enemy, must have equaled that of the British; several of their most distinguished chiefs and warriors, were of the number of the slain: and so decisive was the victory obtained over them, that in the succeeding campaign against the Indians on the Muskingum, Boquet found not much difficulty in bringing them to terms. A cessation of hostilities was agreed to, upon condition that they would give up all the whites then detained by them in captivity. Upwards of three hundred prisoners were then redeemed; but the season being far advanced and the others scattered in different parts of the country, it was stipulated, that they should be brought into Fort Pitt early in the ensuing spring; and as a security that they would comply with this condition of the armistice, six of their chiefs were delivered up as hostages—these however succeeded in making their escape before the army arrived at Fort Pitt.¹

The ill success which had attended the combined operations of the Indians, during this war, the difficulty of procuring ammunition to support it, and the fact that it had begun to be carried into their own country, disposed them to make peace. A treaty was accordingly concluded with them by Sir William Johnson in 1765. Previous to this however, some few depredations were committed by

¹ Henry Bouquet was born at Rolle, in the canton of Berne, Switzerland, in 1721, and at the age of seventeen he entered into the service of the states general of Holland; subsequently engaged under the banner of Sardinia, and distinguished himself at the battle of Cony. In 1748, he was a lieutenant-colonel in the Swiss guards, in the service of Holland. At length, in 1756, he entered the English army, serving in the Royal Americans, and co-operated with Gen. Forbes on the campaign against Fort Du Quesne, repulsing an attack of French and Indians on Loyal Hanna. He afterwards served in Canada, and was sent for the relief of Fort Pitt, when beleaguered in 1763. While marching on this service, he signally defeated the Indians at Bushy Run, after a two days' engagement, in August of that year, and relieved Fort Pitt. In 1764, he led an expedition against the Ohio Indians, compelling them to sue for peace. He died at Pensacola, September 2, 1765, of a prevailing fever, in the prime of life, at the age of forty-four years. He had attained the rank of general.—L. C. D.

the Indians, in contravention of the agreement made with them by Col. Boquet; and which induced a belief that the want of clothes and ammunition, [82] was the real cause of their partial forbearance. It was therefore of great consequence, to prevent their obtaining a supply of these necessities, until there could be some stronger assurance, than had been given, of their pacific disposition.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of this impression, and the fact, that a royal proclamation had been issued, forbidding any person trading with the Indians, yet in March 1765 a number of wagons, laden with goods and warlike stores for the Indians, was sent from Philadelphia to Henry Pollens of Conococheague, to be thence transported on pack horses to Fort Pitt. This very much alarmed the country; and many individuals remonstrated against the propriety of supplying the Indians at that particular juncture; alleging the well known fact, that they were then destitute of ammunition and clothing, and that to furnish them with those articles, would be to aid in bringing on another frontier war, and to lend themselves to the commission of those horrid murders, by which those wars were always distinguished. Remonstrance was fruitless. The gainful traffick which could be then carried on with the Indians, banished every other consideration; and seventy horses, packed with goods, were directed on to Fort Pitt.

In this situation of things, Capt. James Smith, (who had been with Boquet during the campaign of 1764, and was well convinced that a supply at that time of clothing and ammunition, would be the signal for the commencement of hostilities) collected ten of his "Black boys," painted and dressed as Indians; and waylaid the caravan, near a place called the "Side long Hill." He disposed his men in pairs, behind trees along the road, at intervals of about 60 yards, with orders for the second not to fire 'till the first had reloaded, so that a regular, slow fire might be maintained at once, from front to rear.

As soon as the cavalcade approached, the firing commenced, and the pack horses beginning to fall by the side of their conductors, excited the fear of the latter, and in-

duced them to cry out "Gentlemen what would you have us to do." Captain Smith replied, "collect all your loads to the front, deposit them in one place; take your private property and retire." These things were accordingly done; and the goods left (consisting of blankets, shirts, beads, vermilion, powder, lead, tomahawks, scalping knives, &c.) were immediately burned or otherwise destroyed.

[83] The traders then went to Fort London, and obtaining of the commanding officer a party of Highland soldiers, proceeded in quest of the *Robbers* (as they termed them;) some of whom were taken and carried into the Fort. Capt. Smith then raised about 300 riflemen, and marching to Fort London, occupied a position on an eminence near it. He had not been long there before he had more than twice as many of the garrison, prisoners in his camp, as there were of his men in the guard house. Under a flag of truce proceeding from the Fort, a convention for the exchange of prisoners was entered into between Capt. Grant, the commander of the garrison, and Capt. Smith, and the latter with his men, immediately returned to their homes.¹

¹ The following song was soon after composed by Mr. George Campbell (an Irish gentleman who had been educated in Dublin,) and was frequently sung in the neighborhood to the tune of the *Black Joke*.

Ye patriot souls who love to sing,
What serves your country and your king,
In wealth, peace, and royal estate;
Attention give whilst I rehearse,
A modern fact, in jingling verse,
How party interest strove what it cou'd,
To profit itself by public blood,
But justly met its merited fate.

Let all those Indian traders claim,
Their just reward, in glorious fame,
For vile, base and treacherous ends,
To Pollins in the spring they sent
Much warlike stores, with an intent,
To carry them to our barbarous foes,
Expecting that nobody dare oppose
A present to their Indian friends.

Astonished at the wild design
Frontier inhabitants combin'd,

Occurrences such as this, were afterwards of too frequent [84] recurrence. The people had been taught by experience, that the fort afforded very little, if any protection to those who were not confined within its walls—they were jealous of the easy, and yet secure life led by the garrison, and apprehensive of the worst consequences

With brave souls to stop their career,
Although some men apostatized
Who first the grand attempt advis'd,
The bold frontiers they bravely stood,
To act for their king, and their country's good
In joint league, and strangers to fear.

On March the fifth, in sixty-five,
Their Indian presents did arrive,
In long pomp and cavalcade,
Near Sidelong-hill, where in disguise,
Some patriots did their train surprise,
And quick as lightning tumbled their loads
And kindled them bonfires in the woods;
And mostly burnt their whole brigade.

At London when they heard the news,
They scarcely knew which way to choose,
For blind rage and discontent;
At length some soldiers they sent out,
With guides for to conduct the route,
And seized some men that were travelling there
And hurried them into London, where
They laid them fast with one consent.

But men of resolution thought
Too much to see their neighbors caught
For no crime but false surmise;
Forthwith they join'd a warlike band,
And march'd to London out of hand,
And kept the jailors prisoners there,
Until our friends enlarged were,
Without fraud or any disguise.

Let mankind censure or commend,
This rash performance in the end,
Then both sides will find their account.
'Tis true no law can justify
To burn our neighbors property,
But when this property is design'd
To serve the enemies of mankind,
Its high treason in the amount.

from the intercourse of traders with the Indians. Under those feelings, they did not scruple to intercept the passage of goods to the trading posts, and commit similar outrages to those above described, if there were any interference on the part of the neighboring forts. On one occasion, Capt. Grant was himself taken prisoner, and [85] detained 'till restitution was made the inhabitants of some guns, which had been taken from them, by soldiers from the garrison; and in 1769, a quantity of powder, lead and other articles was taken from some traders passing through Bedford county, and destroyed. Several persons, supposed to have been of the party who committed this outrage, were apprehended, and laid in irons in the guard house at Fort Bedford.

Capt. Smith, although in no wise engaged in this transaction, nor yet approving it, was nevertheless so indignant that an offence against the civil authorities, should be attempted to be punished by a military tribunal, that he resolved on effecting their release. To accomplish this, he collected eighteen of his "Black boys," in whom he knew he could confide; and marched along the main road in the direction of Fort Bedford. On his way to that place, he did not attempt to conceal his object, but freely told to every one who enquired, that he was going to take Fort Bedford. On the evening of the second day of their march, they arrived at the crossings of Juniata, (14 miles from Bedford) and erected tents as if they intended encamping there all night.

Previous to this, Capt. Smith had communicated his intention to Mr. William Thompson (who lived in Bedford and on whom he could rely,) and prevailed on him to obtain what information he could as to the effect produced in the garrison by the preparations which he was making for its attack; and acquaint him with it. That he might be enabled to do this with greater certainty, a place and hour were appointed at which Capt. Smith would meet him.

About 11 o'clock at night the march was resumed, and moving briskly they arrived near to Bedford, where they met Thompson; who communicated to them the fact, that the garrison had been apprized of their object that in

consequence of having heard from them on the preceding evening, at the Crossings of Juniata, it was not expected they would arrive before mid-day, that their number was known, and the enterprise ridiculed. Thompson then returned to Bedford, and the party moved silently under covert of the banks of the river, 'till they approached near to the Fort, where they lay concealed, awaiting the opening of the gate. About day light Thompson apprised them that the guard had thrown open the gate, and were taking their morning's dram; that the arms were stacked not far from the entrance into the Fort, and three centinels on the wall.

Upon hearing these things, Capt. Smith with his men rushed rapidly to the Fort, and the morning being misty, were not discovered 'till they had reached the gate. At that instant the centinels fired their guns and gave the alarm; but Capt. Smith and his men took possession of the arms, and raised a loud shout, before the soldiers of the garrison could learn the cause of the alarm, or get to the scene of action.

[86] Having thus obtained possession of the Fort, Capt. Smith had the prisoners released from the guard-house, and compelling a blacksmith to knock off their irons, left the Fort with them and returned to Conococheague. "This, Capt. Smith says, was the first British fort in America, taken by what they called American rebels."

Some time after this, an attempt was made to apprehend Capt. Smith, as he was proceeding to survey and locate land on the Youghogany river. In the encounter which succeeded, a man (by the name of Johnson) was killed; and the murder being charged on Smith, he was confined for a time in Bedford jail; but fearing a release, the civil authority sent him privately through the wilderness to Carlisle, to await a trial for the alleged offence. On hearing this, upwards of three hundred persons (among whom were his old "Black boys,") proceeded to Carlisle to effect a rescue; and were only prevented the accomplishment of their object, by the solicitation of Smith himself. He

knew his innocence, and preferred awaiting a trial; and how willing soever he might have been to oppose any encroachments of the military, he held in just abhorrence, an opposition to the civil authority of his country. He was put on his trial and acquitted.¹

¹ The following extract from the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of November 2d, 1769, details the circumstances of this transaction.

"James Smith, his brother and brother in law, were going out to survey and improve their land, on the waters of the Youghogony—Expecting to be gone some time, they took with them their arms, and horses loaded with necessaries; and as Smith's brother in law was an artist in surveying, he had also with him the instruments for that business. Travelling on their way and within nine miles of Bedford, they overtook and joined in company with one Johnson and Moorhead, who had likewise horses packed with liquor and seed wheat—their intentions being also to make improvements on their lands. Arrived at the parting of the road near Bedford, they separated, one party going through town for the purpose of having a horse shod; these were apprehended and put under confinement.—James Smith, Johnson and Moorhead taking the other road, met John Holmes of Bedford, to whom Smith spoke in a friendly manner but received no answer. Smith and his companions proceeded to where the two roads again united; and waited there the arrival of the others.

"At this time a number of men came riding up, and asked Smith his name. On his telling them who he was, they immediately presented their pistols, and commanded him to surrender or he was a dead man. Smith stepped back and asking if they were highwaymen, charged them to keep off; when immediately Robert George (one of the assassins) snatched a pistol at Smith's head; and that (as George acknowledged under oath) before Smith had offered to [87] shoot. Smith then presented his gun at another of the assailants, who was holding Johnson with one hand, while with the other he held a pistol, which he was preparing to discharge. Two shots were fired, one by Smith's gun, the other by the pistol, so quick as to be just distinguishable, and Johnson fell. Smith was then taken and carried to Bedford, where John Holmes (who had met him on the road, and hastened to Bedford with the intelligence) held an inquest over the dead body of Johnson. One of the assailants being the only witness examined, it was found that "Johnson had been murdered by Smith," who was thereupon committed for trial. But jealousy arising in the breasts of many, that the inquest was not so fair as it should have been, William Deny, (the coroner of Bedford county) thought proper to re-examine the matter; and summoning a jury of unexceptionable men, out of three townships—men whose candour, probity, and honesty are unquestionable, and having raised the corpse, held a solemn inquest over it for three days.

"In the course of their scrutiny, they found the shirt of Johnson, around the bullet hole, blackened by the powder of the charge with

[87] Events such as those which have been narrated, serve to shew the state of things which existed at that day; and to point out the evils necessarily resulting, from an absence of municipal regulations. Man, in every station and condition of life, requires the controlling hand of civil power, to confine him in his proper sphere, and to check every advance of invasion, on the rights of others. Unrestrained liberty speedily degenerates into licentiousness. Without the necessary curbs and restraints of law, men would relapse into a state of nature; [88] and although the obligations of justice (the basis of society) be natural obligations; yet such are the depravity and corruption of human nature, that without some superintending and coercive power, they would be wholly disregarded; and hu-

which he had been killed. One of the assailants being examined, sworn to the respective spots of ground on which they stood at the time of firing, which being measured, was found to be 23 feet distance from each other. The experiment was then made of shooting at the shirt an equal distance both with and against the wind, to ascertain if the powder produced the stain; but it did not. Upon the whole the jury, after the most accurate examination and mature deliberation, brought in their verdict that one of the assailants must necessarily have done the murder."

Captain Smith was a brave and enterprising man. In 1766, he, in company with Joshua Horton, Uriah Stone, William Baker and James Smith, by the way of Holstein, explored the country south of Kentucky at a time when it was entirely uninhabited; and the country between the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, to their entrance into the Ohio. Stone's river, a branch of the Cumberland and emptying into it not far above Nashville, was named by them in this expedition.

After his acquittal from the charge of having murdered Johnson, he was elected and served as one of the board of commissioners, for regulating taxes and laying the county levy, in the county of Bedford. [88] He was for several years a delegate from the county of Westmoreland, to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania; and in the war of the revolution was an officer of merit and distinction. In 1781 he removed to Kentucky and settled in Bourbon county not far from Paris; was a member of the convention which met at Danville, to confer about a separation from the state of Virginia, in 1788, from which time until 1799, with the exception of two years, he was either a delegate of the convention or of the General Assembly of Kentucky.

Comment by L. C. D.—It would seem from Col. Smith's own statement, that his removal to, and settlement in, Bourbon county, Ky., was in 1788.

Following in the trail of the fugitives, when they had arrived near to Loes creek, a distance of but six miles, they found the body of Mrs. Grigsby and of her younger child, where they had recently been killed and scalped. The situation of this unfortunate woman (being near the hour of confinement,) and the entire helplessness of the child, were hindrances to a rapid retreat; and fearing pursuit, the Indians thus inhumanly rid themselves of those incumbrances to their flight and left them to accidental discovery, or to become food for the beasts of the forest.

[159] Stimulated to more ardent exertions by the distressing scene just witnessed, the pursuers pushed forward, with increased expectation of speedily overtaking and punishing, the authors of this bloody deed; leaving two of their party to perform the sepulture of the unfortunate mother, and her murdered infant. But before the whites were aware of their nearness to the Indians, these had become apprized of their approach, and separated, so as to leave no trail by which they could be farther traced. They had of course to give over the pursuit; and returned home, to provide more effectually against the perpetration of similar acts of atrocity and darkness.

A short time after this, two Indians came on the West Fork, and concealed themselves near to Coon's fort, awaiting an opportunity of effecting some mischief. While thus lying in ambush, a daughter of Mr. Coon came out for the purpose of lifting some hemp in a field near to the fort, and by the side of the road. Being engaged in performing this business, Thomas Cunningham and Enoch James passing along, and seeing her, entered into conversation with her, and after a while proceeded on their road. But before they had gone far, alarmed by the report of a gun, they looked back and saw an Indian run up to the girl, tomahawk and scalp her. The people of the fort were quickly apprised of what had been done, and immediately turned out in pursuit; but could not trace the course taken by the savages. It afterwards appeared that the Indians had been for some time waiting for the girl to come near enough for them to catch and make her prisoner, before she could alarm the fort, or get

within reach of its guns; but when one of them crossed the fence for this purpose, she espied him and ran directly towards the fort.—Fearing that he would not be able to overtake her, without approaching the fort so as to involve himself in some danger, he shot her as she ran; and going up to her he tomahawked and scalped her. In endeavoring then to secure himself by flight, he was shot at by James, but at so great distance as to prevent the doing of execution.

In the neighborhood of Wheeling, some mischief of this kind was done about the same time, and by Indians who acted so warily, as to avoid being discovered and punished. A man by the name of Thomas Ryan was killed in a field some distance from the house, and a negro fellow at work with him, [160] taken prisoner and carried off. No invasion however, of that country, had been as yet, of sufficient importance to induce the people to forsake their homes and go into the forts.—Scouting parties were constantly traversing the woods in every direction, and so successfully did they observe every avenue to the settlements, that the approach of Indians was generally discovered and made known, before any evil resulted from it. But in August the whole country bordering on the Ohio, from Fort Pitt to Wheeling, became justly alarmed for its fate; and the most serious apprehensions for the safety of its inhabitants, were excited in the bosoms of all. Intelligence was conveyed to General Hand at Fort Pitt,¹ by some friendly Indians from the Moravian towns, that a large army of the north western confederacy, had come as far as those villages, and might soon be expected to strike an awful blow on some part of the Ohio settlements. The Indian force was represented as being so great, as to preclude all idea of purchasing safety, by open conflict;

¹ General Hand was commandant, and George Morgan Indian agent, at Fort Pitt. Runners from the Moravian towns on the Tuscarawas and Muskingum rivers, in Ohio, frequently came into the fort during the summer, with dispatches for either of these officials. The Delawares, as a nation, were friendly throughout the year. The hostiles were chiefly composed of Wyandots and Mingoes, but with them were a few Shawnees and Delawares.—R. G. T.

his hold too soon, the gigantic savage was again on his feet and ready for another grapple. In this both were carried beyond their depth, and had to swim for safety. Both sought the shore, and each, with all his might, strained every nerve to reach it first that he might end the conflict with one of the guns lying on the beach. The Indian was the more expert swimmer, and Poe, outstripped by him, turned and swam farther into the river, in the hope of avoiding being [269] shot by diving. Fortunately his antagonist laid hold on the gun which had been discharged at the little Indian, and he was enabled to get some distance into the river.

At this juncture, two others of the whites came up; and one of them mistaking Poe for a wounded savage attempting to escape, shot and wounded him in the shoulder. He then turned to make for shore, and seeing his brother Andrew on the bank, called to him to "shoot the big Indian." Having done this, Andrew plunged into the river to assist Adam in getting out; and the wounded savage, to preserve his scalp, rolled himself into the water, and struggling onward, sunk and could not be found.

During the continuance of this contest, the whites had overtaken the other five Indians, and after a desperate conflict, succeeded in killing all but one; with the loss of three of their companions.—A great loss, when the number engaged is taken into consideration.

[270] CHAPTER XVI.

The treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain, which terminated so gloriously the war of the revolution, did not put a period to Indian hostilities.¹ The aid which had been extended to the savages, and which enabled them so successfully to gratify their implacable resentment against the border country, being withdrawn, they were less able to cope with the whites than they had been, and were less a hindrance to the population and improvement of those sections of country which had been the theatre of their many outrages. In North Western Virginia, indeed, although the war continued to be waged against its inhabitants, yet it assumed a different aspect. It became a war rather of plunder, than of blood; and although in the predatory incursions of the Indians, individuals some times fell a sacrifice to savage passion; yet this was of such rare occurrence, that the chronicles of those days are divested of much of the interest, which attaches to a detail of Indian hostilities. For several years, scarce an incident occurred worthy of being rescued from oblivion.

In Kentucky it was far otherwise. The war continued to be prosecuted there, with the wonted vigor of the savages.—The General Assembly of Virginia having, at the close of the revolution, passed an act for surveying the land set apart for her officers and soldiers, south of Green river, the surveyors descended to the Ohio, to explore the country and perform the duties assigned them. On their arrival they found it occupied by the savages, and acts of

¹ News of the preliminary articles of peace, which had been signed at Paris, November 30, 1782, did not reach Fort Pitt until May, 1783. In July following, De Peyster, British commandant at Detroit, gathered at that post the chiefs of eleven tribes as far south as the Great Miami and the Wabash, and informed them of the event.—R. G. T.

hostilities immediately [271] ensued. In December, 1788, the Legislature likewise passed an act, appropriating the country between the Scioto and Miami rivers, for the purpose of satisfying the claims of the officers and soldiers, if the land previously allotted, in Kentucky, should prove insufficient for that object. This led to a confederacy of the many tribes of Indians, interested in those sections of country, and produced such feelings and gave rise to such acts of hostility on their part, as induced Benjamin Harrison the Governor of Virginia, in November, 1784, to recommend the postponement of the surveys; and in January, 1785, a proclamation was issued, by Patrick Henry, (successor of Gov. Harrison) commanding the surveyors to desist and leave the country. A treaty was soon after concluded, by which the country on the Scioto, Miami, and Muskingum, was ceded to the United States.¹ In this interval of time, North Western Virginia enjoyed almost uninterrupted repose. There was indeed an alarm of Indians, on Simpson's creek in 1783, but it soon subsided; and the circumstance which gave rise to it (the discharge of a gun at Major Power) was generally attributed to a white man.

In 1784, the settlement towards the head of West Fork, suffered somewhat from savage invasion. A party of Indians came to the house of Henry Flesher, (where the town of Weston now is) and fired at the old gentleman, as he was returning from the labors of the field. The gun discharged at him, had been loaded with two balls, and both taking effect, crippled his arm a good deal. Two savages immediately ran towards him; and he, towards the door; and just as he was in the act of entering it, one of them had approached so closely as to strike at him with the butt end of his gun. The breech came first in contact with the facing of the door, and descending on his head, seemed to throw him forward into the house, and his wife closing

¹ The treaty was held at Fort McIntosh, at the mouth of the Beaver, early in January, 1785. The tribes represented were the Wyandots, Chippewas, Delawares, and Ottawas. The commissioners were Arthur Lee, Richard Butler, and George Rogers Clark. Col. Josiah Harmar was in charge of the troops.—R. G. T.

the door, no attempt was made by the savages to force it open. Still, however, they did not feel secure; and as soon as they became assured that the savages were withdrawn, they left the house and sought security elsewhere. Most of the family lay in the woods during the night,—one young woman succeeded in finding the way to Hacker's creek, from whence Thomas Hughes immediately departed to find the others. This was effected early next morning, and all were safely escorted to that settlement.

[272] The foregoing event happened in September, and in a few days after, as Daniel Radcliff was proceeding to the Brushy Fork of Elk creek on a hunting expedition, he was shot (probably by the Indians who had been at Flesher's,) tomahawked and scalped in a shocking manner.

In 1785, six Indians came to Binghamon creek, (a branch of the West Fork) and made their appearance upon a farm occupied by Thomas and Edward Cunningham. At this time the two brothers were dwelling with their families in separate houses, but nearly adjoining, though not in a direct line with each other. Thomas was then on a trading visit east of the mountain, and his wife and four children were collected in their room for the purpose of eating dinner, as was Edward with his family, in their house. Suddenly a lusty savage entered where were Mrs. Thomas Cunningham and her children, but seeing that he would be exposed to a fire from the other house, and apprehending no danger from the woman and children, he closed the door and seemed for a time only intent on the means of escaping.

Edward Cunningham had seen the savage enter his brother's house, and fastened his own door, seized his gun and stepping to a small aperture in the wall next the house in which was the Indian, and which served as well for a port hole as for the admission of light, was ready to fire whenever the savage should make his appearance. But in the other house was a like aperture, and through it the Indian fired at Edward, and shouted the yell of victory. It was answered by Edward. He had seen the aim of the savage only in time to avoid it,—the bark from the log close to his head, was knocked off by the ball and flew

into his face. The Indian seeing that he had missed his object, and observing an adze in the room, deliberately commenced cutting an aperture in the back wall through which he might pass out without being exposed to a shot from the other building.¹

Another of the Indians came into the yard just after the firing of his companion, but observing Edward's gun pointing through the port hole, he endeavored to retreat out of its range. He failed of his purpose. Just as he was about to spring over the fence, the gun was fired and he fell forward. The ball however only fractured his thigh bone, and he was yet able to hobble over the fence and take shelter behind a [273] coverlet suspended on it, before Edward could again load his gun.

While the Indian was engaged in cutting a hole in the wall, Mrs. Cunningham made no attempt to get out. She was well aware that it would draw down upon her head the fury of the savage; and that if she escaped this, she would most probably be killed by some of those who were watching around, before the other door could be opened for her admission.—She knew too, that it was impossible for her to take the children with her, and could not brook the idea of leaving them in the hands of the savage monster. She even trusted to the hope that he would withdraw, as soon as he could, without molesting any of them. A few minutes served to convince her of the fallacy of this expectation. When the opening had been made sufficiently large, he raised his tomahawk, sunk it deep into the brains of one of the children, and throwing the scarcely lifeless body into the back yard, ordered the mother to follow after. There was no alternative but death, and she obeyed his order, stepping over the dead body of one of her children,² with an infant in her arms and two others

¹ L. V. McWhorter, well informed in the local traditions, writes: "When the Indian sprang into the house, with drawn tomahawk, he closed and for a few moments stood with his back to the door. Then, while cutting an opening through the wall, he asked Mrs. Cunningham how many men there were in the other house. She answered by holding up the extended fingers of both hands, indicating 10."—R. G. T.

² McWhorter: "Mrs. Cunningham related that the last she

streaming from horror at the sight, and clinging to her. When all were out he scalped the murdered boy, and setting fire to the house, retired to an eminence in the field, where two of the savages were, with their wounded companion.—leaving the other two to watch the opening of Edward Cunningham's door, when the burning of the house should force the family from their shelter. They were disappointed in their expectation of that event by the exertions of Cunningham and his son. When the flame from the one house communicated to the roof of the other, they ascended to the loft, threw off the loose boards which covered it, and extinguished the fire;—the savages shooting at them all the while, and their balls frequently striking close by.

Despairing of accomplishing farther havoc, and fearful of detection and pursuit, the Indians collected together and prepared to retreat. Mrs. Cunningham's eldest son was first tomahawked and scalped; the fatal hatchet sunk into the head of her little daughter, whom they then took by the arms and legs, and slinging it repeatedly against a tree, ended its sufferings with its life. Mrs. Cunningham stood motionless with grief, and in momentary expectation of having the same dealt to her and her innocent infant. But no! She was [274] doomed to captivity; and with her helpless babe in her arms, was led off from this scene of horror and of woe. The wounded savage was carried on a rough litter, and they all departed, crossing the ridge to Binghamon creek, near which they found a cave that afforded them shelter and concealment.¹ After night, they returned to Edward Cunningham's, and finding no one, plundered and fired the house.

When the savages withdrew in the evening, Cunning-

saw of her little daughter, was one quivering little foot sticking up over a log behind which she had been thrown."—R. G. T.

¹ McWhorter: "The cave in which Mrs. Cunningham was concealed is on Little Indian Run, a branch of Big Binghamon Creek, on which stream the tragedy took place. The cave is about two miles north-west of the site of the capture, and in Harrison County, W. Va."—R. G. T.

ham went with his family into the woods, where they remained all night, there being no settlement nearer than eight or ten miles. In the morning, proceeding to the nearest house, they gave the alarm and a company of men was soon collected to go in pursuit of the Indians. When they came to Cunningham's and found both houses heaps of ashes, they buried the bones which remained of the boy who was murdered in the house, with the bodies of his brother and little sister, who were killed in the field; but so cautiously had the savages conducted their retreat that no traces of them could be discovered, and the men returned to their homes.

Some days after, circumstances induced the belief that the Indians were yet in the neighborhood, and men were again assembled for the purpose of tracing them. They were now enabled to distinguish the trail, and pursued it near to the cave, where from the number of rocks on the ground and the care which had been taken by the Indians to leave no vestige, they could no longer discover it. They however examined for it in every direction until night forced them to desist. In thinking over the incidents of the day; the cave occurred to the mind of Major Robinson, who was well acquainted with the woods, and he concluded that the savages must be concealed in it. It was examined early next morning, but they had left it the preceding night and departed for their towns. After her return from captivity, Mrs. Cunningham stated, that in time of the search on the day before, the Indians were in the cave, and that several times the whites approached so near, that she could distinctly hear their voices; the savages standing with their guns ready to fire, in the event of their being discovered, and forcing her to keep the infant to her breast, lest its crying might point to the place of their concealment.¹

In consequence of their stay at this place on account of their wounded companion, it was some time before they

¹ McWhorter: "Mrs. Cunningham stated that an Indian stood over her with an uplifted tomahawk, to prevent her from crying out. At times, the whites were upon the very rock above their heads."—R. G. T.

received [375] in their own country;¹ and Mrs. Cunningham's sufferings, of body as well as mind were truly great. Scurvy and hunger oppressed her sorely,—the infant in her arms, wanting the nourishment derived from the due sustenance of the mother, pined at the breast for milk, in vain—blood came in stead; and the Indians perceiving this, put a period to its sufferings, with the tomahawk, even while clinging to its mother's bosom. It was cast a little distance from the path, and left without a leaf or bush to hide it from beasts of prey.

The anguish of this woman during the journey to the towns, can only be properly estimated by a parent; her bodily sufferings may be inferred from the fact, that for ten days her only sustenance consisted of the head of a wild turkey and three papaws, and from the circumstance that the skin and nails of her feet, scalded by frequent wading of the water, came with her stockings, when upon their arrival at a village of the Delawares, she was permitted to draw them off. Yet was she forced to continue on with them the next day.—One of the Indians belonging to the village where they were, by an application of some sanative herbs, very much relieved the pain which she endured.

When she came to the town of those by whom she had been made prisoner, although receiving no barbarous or cruel usage, yet everything indicated to her, that she was reserved for some painful torture. The wounded Indian had been left behind, and she was delivered to his father. Her clothes were not changed, as is the case when a prisoner is adopted by them; but she was compelled to wear them, dirty as they were,—a bad omen for a captive. She was however, not long in apprehension of a wretched fate. A conference was soon to take place between the Indians and whites, preparatory to a treaty of peace; and

¹ McWhorter says local tradition has it that the Indians remained in the cave a night and a day; they departed before daylight, during the second night. Mrs. Cunningham related that just before leaving, the wounded brave was borne from the cave by his fellows, and she never again saw him; her opinion was, that he was then dead, and his body was sunk in a neighboring pool.—R. G. T.

witnessing an uncommon excitement in the village one evening, upon inquiring, learned that the Great captain Simon Girty had arrived. She determined to prevail with him, if she could, to intercede for her liberation, and seeing him next day passing near on horseback, she laid hold on his stirrup, and implored his interference. For a while he made light of her petition,—telling her that she would be as well there as in her own country, and that if he were disposed to do her a kindness he could not as his saddle bags were too small to conceal her; but her importunity at length prevailed, and he whose heart had been so long steeled [276] against every kindly feeling, every sympathetic impression, was at length induced to perform an act of generous, disinterested benevolence. He paid her ransom, had her conveyed to the commissioners for negotiating with the Indians, and by them she was taken to a station on the south side of the Ohio.¹ Here she met with two gentlemen (Long and Denton) who had been at the treaty to obtain intelligence of their children taken captive some time before, but not being able to gain any information respecting them, they were then returning to the interior of Kentucky and kindly furnished her a horse.

In consequence of the great danger attending a journey through the wilderness which lay between the settlements in Kentucky and those on the Holstein, persons scarcely ever performed it but at particular periods of the year, and in caravans, the better to defend themselves against attacks of savages. Notice of the time and place of the assembling of one of these parties being given, Mrs. Cunningham prepared to accompany it; but before that time arrived, they were deterred from the undertaking by the report that a company of travellers, stronger than theirs would be, had been encountered by the Indians, and all either killed or made prisoners. Soon after another party

¹ Mrs. Cunningham had been over three years with the savages, when she was taken to a great Indian conference held at the foot of the Maumee rapids, "at or near the site of the present Perrysburgh, Ohio," in the autumn of 1788. Girty brought the attention of McKee, then a British Indian agent, to the matter, and McKee furnished the trinkets which constituted the ransom.—R. G. T.

resolved on a visit to Virginia, and Mrs. Cunningham was furnished a horse belonging to a gentleman on Holstein (which had escaped from him while on a buffalo hunt in Kentucky and was found after his return,) to carry her that far on her way home. Experiencing the many unpleasant circumstances incident to such a jaunt, she reached Holstein, and from thence, after a repose of a few days, keeping up the Valley of Virginia, she proceeded by the way of Shenandoah, to the county of Harrison.¹ Here she was sadly disappointed in not meeting with her husband. Having understood that she had been ransomed and taken to Kentucky, he had, some time before, gone on in quest of her. Anxiety for his fate, alone and on a journey which she well knew to be fraught with many dangers, she could not cheerily partake of the general joy excited by her return. In a few days however, he came back. He had heard on Holstein of her having passed there and he retraced his steps. Arriving at his brother Edward's, he again enjoyed the satisfaction of being with all that was then dear to him on earth. It was a delightful satisfaction, but presently damped by the recollection of [277] the fate of his luckless children—Time assuaged the bitterness of the recollection and blessed him with other and more fortunate children.²

In October 1784, a party of Indians ascended Sandy river and passing over to the head of Clyuch, came to the settlement near where Tazewell court house is now located. Going first to the house of a Mr. Davison, they killed him and his wife; and setting fire to their dwelling, proceeded towards the residence of James Moore, sr. On their way they met Moore salting his horses at a *lick trough* in the woods, and killed him. They then went to the house and captured Mrs. Moore and her seven children, and Sally

¹ See McKnight's *Our Western Border*, pp. 714, 716.—R. G. T.

² Superstition was rife among the Scotch-Irish borderers. McWhorter writes: "On the day before the capture, a little bird came into Mrs. Cunningham's cabin and fluttered around the room. Ever afterwards, she grew frightened whenever a bird would enter her house. The fear that such an occurrence would bring bad luck to a household, was an old and widely-spread superstition."—R. G. T.

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